

EVENTS CALENDAR

Mershon Center Speaker Series

STEPHANIE RICKARD

Ruling the Market: Economic Geography, Electoral Institutions, and Redistribution

Tuesday, November 08, 2016, 3:30PM - 5:00PM

The Mershon Center for International Security Studies

1501 Neil Avenue, Room 120

Columbus, Ohio 43201

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Stephanie Rickard is an associate professor at the London School of Economics. She studies international trade. Currently, she is researching non-tariff barriers to foreign trade, including state subsidies and discriminatory public procurement practices.

Stephanie is a member of the steering committee of the International Political Economy Society (IPES) and the editorial board of the journal *International Organization*. She has appeared on BBC Radio 4's Today programme to discuss various events in the global economy, including the leadership contest at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Abstract

Why do politicians in some democracies redistribute more than in others? I examine this question in the context of particularistic economic policies, which selectively assist small groups of citizens at the expense of many. Government-funded subsidies, for example, help people employed in the subsidized industry but do so at the expense of taxpayers. While the political motivations behind such policies are well understood, the cross-national variation is not. Why do elected leaders enact generous particularistic economic policies in some democracies but not others? Industrial subsidies, for example, vary significantly across democracies, despite international restrictions on their use in both WTO and the EU agreements.

Professor Rickard argues that electoral institutions and economic geography work together to explain industrial subsidies are more generous in some countries than others. Electoral institutions generate incentives for politicians and parties to pursue certain (re-) election strategies. Geography determines which policies best accomplish the institutionally-generated electoral tactics. Sometimes particularistic economic policies are the most efficient option to aid (re-) election. In these cases, international economic agreements do little to curb subsidy spending.



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